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UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/072,431	02/08/2002	Blair E. Nygren	019143.0349	2635

7590 06/27/2006	EXAMINER
Samir A. Bhavsar, Esq. Baker Botts L.L.P. 6th Floor 2001 Ross Avenue Dallas, TX 75201-2980	DESHPANDE, KALYAN K

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
3623	

DATE MAILED: 06/27/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

PTO-90C (Rev. 10/03)

	Application No.	Applicant(s)
Office Action Summary	10/072,431	NYGREN ET AL.
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Kalyan K. Deshpande	3623	

-- *The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address* --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE <u>3</u> MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.
- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1)☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on <u>08 February 2002</u>.

2a)☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b)☒ This action is non-final.

3)☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4)☒ Claim(s) <u>1-37</u> is/are pending in the application.

    4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6)☒ Claim(s) <u>1-37</u> is/are rejected.

7)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8)☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9)☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10)☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a)☐ accepted or b)☐ objected to by the Examiner.

    Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

    Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11)☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12)☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

    a)☐ All b)☐ Some * c)☐ None of:

      1.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

      2.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.

      3.☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

    * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)

2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)

3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
    Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>6/11/03, 12/4/03,</u>. <u>6/6/06</u>

4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
    Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.

5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)

6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Introduction

1.   The following is a non-final office action in response to the communications

received on February 8, 2002. Claims 1-37 are now pending in this application.

Information Disclosure Statement

2.   The examiner has reviewed the patents and articles supplied in the Information

Disclosure Statements (IDS) provided on June 11, 2003, December 4, 2003, and June

6, 2006.

Specification

3.   The attempt to incorporate subject matter into this application by reference to

U.S. Patent Applications entitled "System and Method for Implementing Recording

Plans Using a Presence-Based Plan Manager" and "System and Method for

Implementing Recording Plans Using a Session Manager" is ineffective because of a

failure to provide a serial number for this application.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

4.   The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all

obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

> (a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set
> forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and
> the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the
> invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains.
> Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

5.   Claims 1-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over

Northcutt et al. (U.S. Patent Publication No. 20030126001).

As per claim 1, Northcutt et al. teach:

A system for processing work items, comprising:

a dispatcher operable to (see ¶¶ 10, 12, and 13; where a centralized workflow management system collects and dispatches work items to members.):

receive a plurality of messages (see ¶ 10; where the system is enabled to receive input regarding work items. A work item is a type of message.); and

an active work server communicatively coupled to the dispatcher and operable to (see ¶¶ 10, 12, and 13; where the workflow management system serves as an active work server.):

receive work information associated with at least one message determined by the dispatcher to be associated with a work assignment (see ¶ 65; where a manager receives information submitted by a requestor for work to be done. This information received is work information and is associated to an RFS, the work assignment.);

create a work item associated with the at least one message based at least in part upon the work information, wherein the work item comprises an owner identifier (see ¶ 65; where a manager assigns the work item to a person responsible to complete the work assignment.); and

communicate the work item to an owner associated with the owner identifier (see ¶ 65; where the work assignment is communicated to the person deemed responsible for completing that work assignment. The communication can be done via email.).

Northcutt et al. fail to explicitly teach to "determine if any of the plurality of messages is associated with a work assignment". It is old and well-known in the art to

"determine if any of a plurality of messages is associated with a work assignment". The

advantage of this feature is that it enables the proper organization of information in that

the appropriate personnel are associated with the appropriate information. It would

have been obvious, at the time of the invention, to one of ordinary skill in the art to

combine the feature to "determine if any of a plurality of messages is associated with a

work assignment" with the Northcutt et al. system in order to facilitate the proper

management of information, which is a goal of Northcutt et al. (see ¶ 2).

As per claim 2, Northcutt et al. does not expressly teach the specific data recited;

however, these differences are only found in the non-functional descriptive material and

are not functionally involved in the steps recited nor do they alter the recited structural

elements. The recited method steps would be performed the same regardless of the

specific data. Further, the structural elements remain the same regardless of the

specific data. Thus, this descriptive material will not distinguish the claimed invention

from the prior art in terms of patentability, *see In re Gulack, 703 F.2d 1381, 1385, 217*

USPQ 401, 404 (Fed. Cir. 1983); In re Lowry, 32 F.3d 1579, 32 USPQ2d 1031 (Fed.

Cir. 1994); MPEP ϶ 2106.

As per claim 3, Northcutt et al. teach:

The system of claim 1, wherein each message comprises work information if it is

associated with a work assignment (see ¶ 65; where each message or RFS

submitted is associated with a work request or assignment.).

As per claim 4, Northcutt et al. teach:

The system of claim 1, wherein the work information further comprises work instructions to perform the work assignment (see ¶¶ 65 and 67-69; where each submitted work request contains specific information on the work to be completed. The manager or IT person involved line items specific instructions relating to cost. Furthermore, task information may be entered.).

As per claim 5, Northcutt et al. teach:

The system of claim 4, wherein the work item further comprises the work instructions (see ¶¶ 65 and 67-69; where each submitted work request contains specific information on the work to be completed. The manager or IT person involved line items specific instructions relating to cost. Furthermore, task information may be entered.).

As per claim 6, Northcutt et al. teach:

The system of claim 1, wherein the work information further comprises a work type (see ¶ 66; where the work information has a category code, which is the same as a work type.).

As per claim 7, Northcutt et al. teach:

The system of claim 6, wherein the work item further comprises the work type (see ¶ 67; where the work information is broken down in to categories and each category has a category code and cost associated with it. The category code is the same as a work type.).

Claim 8 recites limitations already addressed by the rejection of claim 2; therefore the same rejection applies to this claim.

As per claim 9, Northcutt et al. teach:

The system of claim 8, wherein the work information further comprises a link to

the received message (see ¶¶ 66 and 68; where a link is communicated to the

owner of a RFS and to the submitter of the RFS.).

Claim 9 further recites limitations already addressed by the rejection of claim 2;

therefore the same rejections apply to this claim.

As per claim 10, Northcutt et al. teach:

The system of claim 8, wherein the work item further comprises a first link to the

received message (see ¶¶ 66 and 68; where a link is communicated to the owner of

a RFS and to the submitter of the RFS.).

Claim 10 further recites limitations already addressed by the rejection of claim 2;

therefore the same rejections apply to this claim.

As per claim 11, Northcutt et al. teach:

The system of claim 10, wherein the work item further comprises a second link to

at least one application used to perform the work assignment (see ¶¶ 60-63; where

users are provided with an interface enabling them to link to resources and tools to

perform modifications or additions to the work assignment.).

6.   Claims 12-18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over

Northcutt et al. (U.S. Patent Publication No. 20030126001) in view of Ouchi et al. (U.S.

Patent Publication No. 20030023675).

As per claim 12, Northcutt et al. fail to explicitly teach a "collaboration server

having a plurality of work folders associated with a plurality of owners". A collaboration

server "comprises any suitable combination of hardware and software that runs

MICROSOFT EXCHANGE, LOTUS NOTES, NOVELL GROUPWISE, or any other

suitable communications software that provides an arrangement of work folders and/or

administrative folders" (see Specification page 10). If collaboration server is running

MICROSOFT OUTLOOK, work folders may comprise public folders that link to a task

list, a calendar, an inbox, or any other suitable component or tool of MICROSOFT

OUTLOOK" (see specification page 10). Ouchi et al., in an analogous art, teach a

"collaboration server having a plurality of work folders associated with a plurality of

owners" (see ¶ 4, 150, 62-63, and 162 - 163; where the workflow system uses software

that runs Microsoft Exchange or Lotus Notes. Each owner has a unique email address

that specifies an in-box for each user. Users have in-boxes and outboxes, which are

folders associated with those users.). The advantage of this feature is that it facilitates

communication with remote users in that they only need simple email programs such as

Microsoft Outlook. It would have been obvious, at the time of the invention, to one of

ordinary skill in the art to combine the feature of a "collaboration server having a

plurality of work folders associated wit ha plurality of owners" taught by Ouchi et al. with

the Northcutt et al. system in order to facilitate communication with remote users, which

is a goal of Ouchi et al. (see ¶ 4).

Claim 13 recites limitations already addressed by the rejection of claim 12;

therefore the same rejection applies to this claim.

As per claim 14, Northcutt et al. fail to explicitly teach the work folder is operable

to store the work item. Ouchi et al., in an analogous art, teach working folders operable

to store work items (see ¶¶ 62-63, 130, 150, and 162 – 163; where users can store the work items in their in-boxes. The email system further stores sent emails in order to recover lost emails.). The advantage of this feature is to facilitate communication with offline and remote users. It would have been obvious, at the time of the invention, to one of ordinary skill in the art to combine the feature of the work folder operable to store the work item taught by Ouchi et al. with the Northcutt et al. system in order to facilitate communication with offline and remote users, which is a goal of Ouchi et al. (see ¶ 4).

As per claim 15, Northcutt et al. fail to explicitly teach a "the collaboration server is operable to present the work item to the owner using a communication tool". Ouchi et al, in an analogous art, teach "the collaboration server is operable to present the work item to the owner using a communication tool" (see ¶ 4, 62-63, and 162 - 163; where the workflow system uses software that runs Microsoft Exchange or Lotus Notes. Microsoft Exchange or Outlook and Lotus Notes are communication tools.). The advantage of this feature is to facilitate communication with offline and remote users. It would have been obvious, at the time of the invention, to one of ordinary skill in the art to combine the feature of "the collaboration server is operable to present the work item to the owner using a communication tool" taught by Ouchi et al. with the Northcutt et al. system in order to facilitate communication with offline and remote users, which is a goal of Ouchi et al. (see ¶ 4).

As per claim 16, Northcutt et al. fail to explicitly teach the "collaboration server is operable to organize a plurality of work items associated with a particular owner". Ouchi et al., in an analogous art, teach the "collaboration server is operable to organize a

plurality of work items associated with a particular owner" (see ¶¶ 62-63, 130, 150, and

162 – 163; where users can store the work items in their in-boxes. The user is enabled

to operate a plurality of sorts on the items within the in-box to determine a priority order.

One such sort is sorting by date.). The advantage of this feature is again to facilitate

communication with remote users. It would have been obvious, at the time of the

invention, to one of ordinary skill in the art to combine the feature of the "collaboration

server is operable to organize a plurality of work items associated with a particular

owner" taught by Ouchi et al. with the Northcutt et al. system in order to facilitate

communication with remote users, which is a goal of Ouchi et al. (see ¶ 4).

As per claim 17, Northcutt et al. fail to explicitly teach the "active work server is

operable to create a work folder for the owner indicated by the owner identifier" and

"further operable to communicate the work item to the created work folder". Ouchi et al,

in an analogous art, teach "active work server is operable to create a work folder for the

owner indicated by the owner identifier" (see ¶ 4, 150, 62-63, and 162 - 163; where the

workflow system uses software that runs Microsoft Exchange or Lotus Notes. Each

owner has a unique email address that specifies an in-box for each user. Users have

in-boxes and outboxes, which are folders associated with those users.) and "further

operable to communicate the work item to the created work folder" (see ¶ 4, 150, 62-63,

and 162 – 163; where work items are communicated via email.). The advantage of

these features is to facilitate communication with offline and remote users. It would

have been obvious, at the time of the invention, to one of ordinary skill in the art to

combine the features of "active work server is operable to create a work folder for the

owner indicated by the owner identifier" and "further operable to communicate the work item to the created work folder" taught by Ouchi et al. with the Northcutt et al. system in order to facilitate communication with offline and remote users, which is a goal of Ouchi et al. (see ¶ 4).

As per claim 18, Northcutt teaches a web server operable to exclude outsiders from reaching sensitive information (see ¶ 77; where the system can be run on the web enabled to restrict access to outsiders.). Northcutt et al. fail to explicitly teach to "verify the identity of an owner" and "provide the owner access to an associated work folder via the user agent, in response to verifying the identity of the owner". It is old and well-known in the art to authenticate users' access to a system and direct the user to information or date associated with the user. The advantage of authenticating users and redirecting them to information associated to them is that it provides an additional layer of information security. It would have been obvious, at the time of the invention, to one of ordinary skill in the art to combine the features of "verify the identity of an owner" and "provide the owner access to an associated work folder via the user agent, in response to verifying the identity of the owner" with the Northcutt et al. system in order to provide an additional layer of information security, which is a goal of Northcutt (see ¶ 77).

Claims 19-37 are for a method reciting the same limitations already rejected under the system claims of 1-18; therefore the rejections of claims 1-18 are applied to claims 19-37.

Conclusion

7.   The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to

applicant's disclosure. The following are pertinent to the current invention, though not

relied upon:

Goossens et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6356880) teach methods, devices and systems

for assigning a value associated with a manufacturing or service-related transaction to a

task within an organizational logical structure includes a step of retrieving attributes of

the transaction, such attributes including, for example, an identification of the item,

whether the item was procured, the PO number, the category of the item and/or an

identification of the sub-inventory, in the case of a material transaction.

Bunting et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6134530) teaches a rule based routing system

and method is disclosed. The rule based routing system and method matches employee

skills with a customer profile thereby facilitating improved customer service and

identifying cross-sell opportunities.

Walker et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5963911) a system where in order to optimize the

utilization of resources (e.g., technicians) in performing a number of jobs, each job is

assigned a cost time-dependent function and each resource is assessed for the time at

which it will be available.

Bushey et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6389400) teach system and methods for

intelligent routing of requests from customers to agents where a request is received at a

service center from a customer.

Brodersen et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6850895) teach a method, a program product, and a system for assigning resources to tasks in a rule based, resource constrained system. This is done by receiving as inputs tasks and task attributes; resources and resource attributes; and assignment rules. These inputs are used to searching a database of tasks, task attributes, and assignment rules thereof, to search a database of resources including resource attributes thereof, and to retrieve resources based upon the resource attributes. Resources are assigned to tasks based upon matches and scores of the resource attributes, the task attributes, and the assignment rules.

Dix (Dix, John; "Teaming with Technology", *Network World*, January 10, 1994) teaches a collaborative environment for the completion of projects.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Kalyan K. Deshpande whose telephone number is (571) 272-5880. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8am-5pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's

supervisor, Tariq Hafiz can be reached on (571) 272-6729. The fax phone number for

the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the

Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for

published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR.

Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only.

For more information about the PAIR system, see http://pair-direct.uspto.gov. Should

you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic

Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Beth Van Doren
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kkd